

**STATE OF VERMONT**  
**Agency of Administration**

<b>STANDARD</b>  <b>STC</b>  State Technology Collaborative	ORIGINAL POLICY ADOPTED BY STC	ORIGINAL POLICY NUMBER
	DATE:  EFFECTIVE DATE <b>3/1/06</b>	ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS Policy for Web Look and Feel of Vermont Web Sites

STATUTORY REFERENCE

OR OTHER AUTHORITY: Web Look and Feel Policy

APPROVAL DATE:

APPROVED BY: **Secretary of Administration**

POLICY TITLE: **Web Look and Feel Standards**

POLICY STATEMENT:

## Introduction

These standards for the look and feel of Vermont state web pages are designed to make State of Vermont websites more accessible, user-friendly and compliant with generally accepted web standards on a world-wide basis.

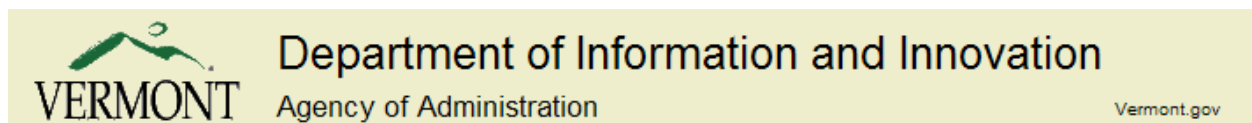
### 1.1 Definitions

- 1.1.1 **Non-graphic font** - The font applied to text characters on a web page, as opposed to characters that are part of a graphic element.
- 1.1.2 **Standard** – In this document the word standard is used to mean “required element of the state look and feel policy implementation.”
- 1.1.3 **Home Page** – The page that appears when the base domain name is entered into a web browser.

### 1.2 Web Site Design Standards

- 1.2.1 **Font** – Every state web page will be presented in sans-serif font. One of the sans-serif fonts, Arial, Helvetica or Verdana, comes standard with most operating systems. These fonts will be the standard for all normal text on state Web pages.
- 1.2.2 **Font Size of Non-Graphic Text** – Every state web site will use a size 3 (12 point) font for headers and titles and a size 2 (10 point) font for body text.
- 1.2.3 **Color Scheme** – Every state web site will present body text in a black font on a white background. As government communication tools all state webs sites must be easily readable by the largest percentage of the population possible. Usability studies indicate that for body text, users can most easily read black text against a white background. This will be the standard for all state Web pages.
- 1.2.4 **Page Design** – The home page of every state site should display all navigation without vertical scrolling being necessary. In some situations this may not be possible but every effort should be made to achieve this goal. This does not apply to any pages other than the home page.
- 1.2.5 **Banner** – The top 70 pixels of every page will be taken up by the site banner. The banner will include the “Moon over the Mountains” logo, the title of the site and the Vermont.gov link to the portal site. Specifications for each of these are available below. The background of the banner area will be left to the discretion of the sponsoring organization and may be either a background color or graphic.

An example of a banner



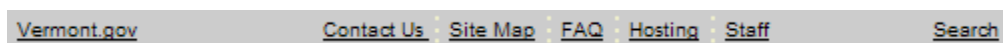
- 1.2.5.1 **Vermont State Logo** – Every state site will have the “Moon over the Mountains” logo placed on the left-hand side of the banner. This logo will link back to the home page of the current site. Two standard versions of the logo will be created for web use one for light and one for dark backgrounds. These graphics will be 50 pixels tall. The logo should be centered vertically in the banner and approximately 10 pixels from the left edge of the banner.
- 1.2.5.2 **Title** – The title of every state web site will consist of two parts, the name of the site and the agency or department that oversees the organization producing the site. (For example, Office of Child Support, Agency of Human Services or Vermont Emergency Management, Department of Public Safety or for top level sites Agency of Administration,

State of Vermont.) The site title will be in 24 point font (approximately 25 pixels tall) and the agency or department name will be 10 point font (approximately 12 pixels tall). The agency or department name will share a baseline with the “Moon over the Mountains” logo. The Site name will appear approximately 5 pixels above this. Both lines will be left justified. The font size of the site name may be adjusted downward if the name is unusually long and must wrap.

**1.2.5.3 Vermont.gov Link** – Every state web site will include a link to the Vermont.gov Web portal in the lower right corner of the banner. The link will appear approximately 5 pixels from the bottom of the banner and 15 pixels from the right edge.

**1.2.6 Top Navigation** – A 26 pixel tall bar will appear directly below the banner on every state web site. The standard color for the bar will be grey (#CCCCCC hex or 204/204/204 RGB). There will be a required link at the far left of this bar to the portal site. The search box shall appear at the far right. The remainder of the bar will be available for site specific links.

An example of the top navigation bar



**1.2.7 Left-hand navigation** – According to usability studies, Internet users are accustomed to navigating through a site using links located on the left side of the screen. This will be the standard for every state web site. The left navigation will be a standard 150 pixels wide. The text used in this area, whether text or graphic based, will be presented in the standard non-graphic fonts.

A sample left hand navigation



- 1.2.7.1 **Agency Logos** – Official agency logos may be displayed on all site pages in the left-hand navigation bar at the bottom. These may not be displayed anywhere else on the site except in the body section where appropriate.

The four official agency logos



- 1.2.8 **Right-hand Navigation** – Right-hand navigation is not required on state web sites. If used the navigation will appear on the rightmost 150 pixels of the web page. The font for right-hand navigation must be the standard non-graphic font and at least 8 point (8 pixels tall).
- 1.2.9 **Footer** – The footer for every state web site will be of a standard format to give users surety that they are dealing with an official Vermont State Government website. The footer will occupy 50 pixels at the bottom of every state web site. The footer will include links to the state Accessibility Policy, Privacy Policy and Copyright Information. There will also be text reading, “A Vermont Government Website” and “Copyright 2003 State of Vermont.” The footer may also include a “Contact” and a “Home” link for the site it appears on if one is desired.

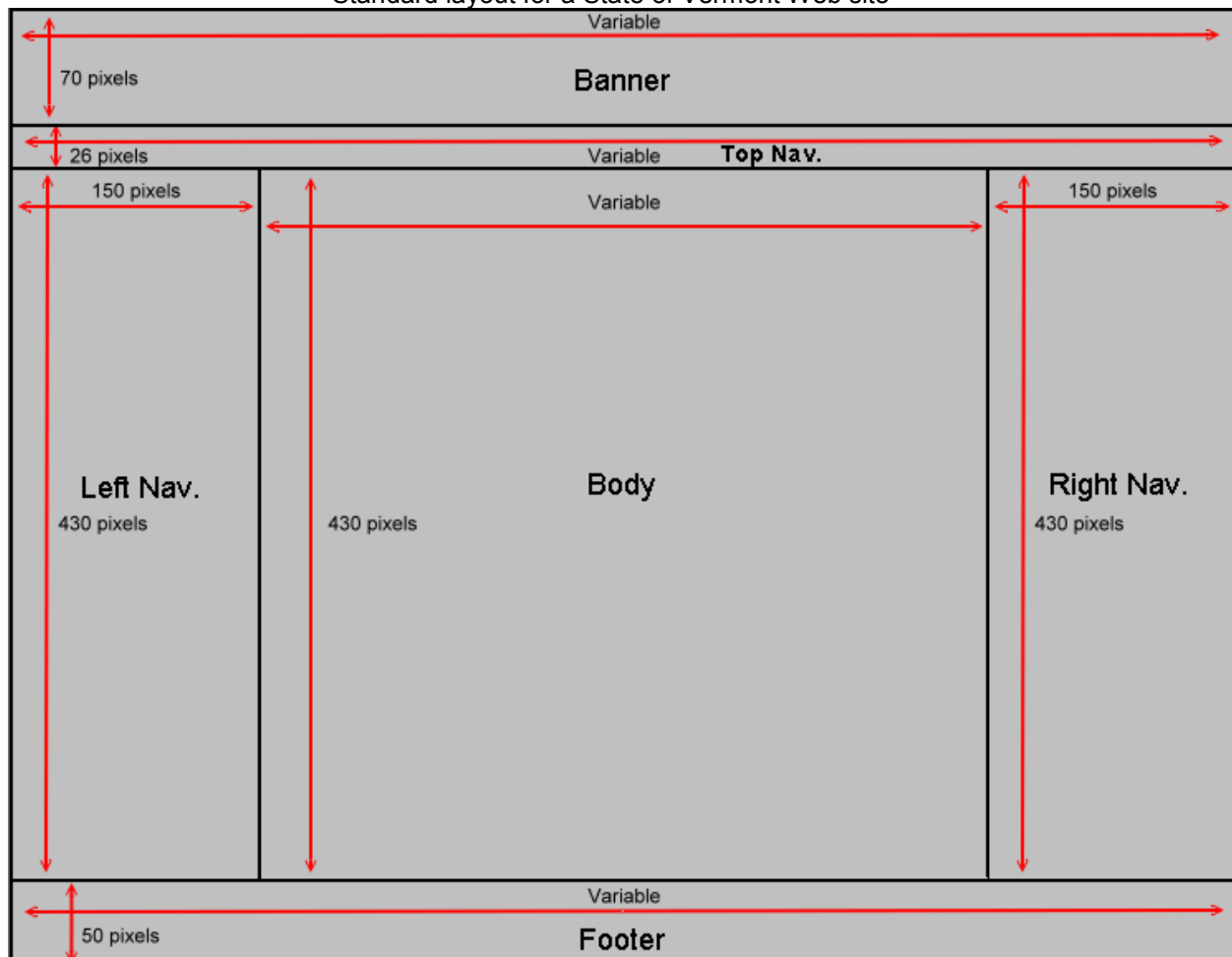
The footer bar

[Accessibility Policy](#) :: [Users with Special Needs](#) :: [Privacy Policy](#) :: [Copyright Information](#)  
A Vermont Government Website  
Copyright © 2005 State of Vermont :: All rights reserved

- 1.2.10 **Standard Page Components**
- 1.2.10.1 **Home Page Link** – The “Moon over the Mountains” logo and site title in the banner will both link back to the site’s home page.
- 1.2.10.2 **Agency Information** – For consistency every site will have an “about” section that describes the function of the agency and its services.
- 1.2.10.3 **Contact Information** – Every site must contain contact information including but not limited to: emails, phone numbers and street addresses for the agency. The site must also contain contact information for users having accessibility problems.
- 1.2.10.4 **Naming Conventions** – Common links across state websites should be referred to in a consistent basis. This list will be amended as the need arises.
- 1.2.10.4.1 **Site Map** – page showing logical flowchart of the site
- 1.2.10.4.2 **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)** – A list of common questions and answers particular to the organization.
- 1.2.10.4.3 **Home Page** – The first page viewed when browsing to the base URL of a site.
- 1.2.11 **Page Formatting**

- 1.2.11.1 **Page Width** – Agency web pages must be viewable without horizontal scrolling on an 800 X 600-pixel screen display. Pages that stretch horizontally to better display in higher resolutions are strongly encouraged. If a page is not designed to stretch to a larger screen size then the page must be coded to center itself on higher resolution displays.
- 1.2.11.2 **Page Areas** –
- 1.2.11.2.1 **Banner** – The page banner will occupy the top 70 pixels of each web page.
- 1.2.11.2.2 **Top Navigation** – The top navigation will occupy 26 pixels directly beneath the banner.
- 1.2.11.2.3 **Left Navigation** – The left navigation will appear directly below the top navigation and occupy the left most 150 pixels of the Web page. Note: The left navigation is ideally limited to items that will appear above the fold on an 800x600 display.
- 1.2.11.2.4 **Right Navigation** – The right navigation appears directly below the top navigation and occupies the right most 150 pixels of the Web page. Note: The right navigation is an optional element.
- 1.2.11.2.5 **Body** – The body occupies that space below the top navigation and between the left and right navigation areas (or right side of page if right navigation is not used). Ideally this area will expand to fill the display of any monitor with resolution set higher than 800x600 pixels.
- 1.2.11.2.6 **Footer** – The footer occupies the bottom 50 pixels of the web page. Note: Ideally this area will be visible without scrolling on the home page of every state Web site.

Standard layout for a State of Vermont Web site



- 1.2.12 **Frames** – Frames shall not be used on state web sites. Screen readers are unable to read them intelligibly. W3C guidelines on frames and alternatives to frames are available from (<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10-HTML-TECHS/#edef-NOFRAMES>).
- 1.2.13 **Meta Tags** – Meta Tags are crucial to state sites appearing in search engine results. These tags identify the contents of a web page. The Department of Information and Innovation meta data builder is available online at, [http://www.dii.state.vt.us/web\\_central/metatagbuilder.html](http://www.dii.state.vt.us/web_central/metatagbuilder.html). Meta tags that should appear on every state web site include:
- 1.2.13.1 **author** – The full name of the agency / division / office responsible for either the creation of the document or the information contained within the document.
- 1.2.13.2 **description** – A brief narrative sentence that summarizes the content and purpose of the information on the web page.
- 1.2.13.3 **keywords** – These are words or phrases that refer to the contents of the page in question.
- 1.2.13.4 **subjects** – When used properly these terms assist in automatically classifying the web page into a Yahoo-like directory for additional access by the user.
- 1.2.13.5 **pubDate** – This is the date the publication is placed on the web. This allows searching of documents by date of origination.
- 1.2.13.6 **resourceType** – This tag describes what type of information the web page provides, such as directories, instructions, laws and regulations, etc.
- 1.2.13.7 **govType** – This tag describes the level of governmental entity of the producer of the information on the page.
- 1.2.13.8 **format** – This tag describes what type of page is being accessed (html, Word file, Excel spreadsheet, picture, animation, audio file, etc.).
- 1.2.13.9 **language** – The language in which the page is presented
- 1.2.13.10 **robots** – This refers to the automated spiders that search engines use to accumulate web site information.
- 1.2.13.11 **revisit-after** – This refers to how often a robot would visit the site.

APPROVED

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Secretary of Administration

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Date